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ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates how planning, with the aid (or complicity) of institutional research, can be a revolutionary activity that facilitates change within an organization and brings the organization to a more accurate understanding of itself. It describes the use of strategic planning at Minot State University (North Dakota) to change a culture that was insular, reactive, complacent, inward-looking, and dependent on state resources to one that is more outward-looking, interactive, entrepreneurial, and globally aware. A planning model was constructed to complement the basic organizational structure of the institution and still allow for a two-way flow of information, counsel, and influence on university decision-making. The model called for analysis and synthesis progressing through four levels: departments, colleges, vice presidential areas, and cabinet. The strategic planning process involved: a major planning effort in year 1 and annual review and adjustments in years 2 through 5; a four-tiered planning structure; a guidance phase, planning and decision phase, and implementation phase; and yearly evaluation of all programs, activities, and resource allocations. The newly created Office of Institutional Research was charged with the evaluation of the first round of strategic planning. Strong and weak points of the planning process are discussed. The paper concludes with discussions and observations of what was learned in the planning lessons and how Minot State's planning process changed institutional culture. Contains 27 references. (GLR)

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Strategic Planning and Organizational Change: Implications for Institutional Researchers

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for Management Research, Policy Analysis, and Planning

This paper was presented at the Thirty-Second Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Atlanta Hilton & Towers, Atlanta, Georgia, May 10-13, 1992. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum Papers.

Jean Endo
Chair and Editor
Forum Publications
Editorial Advisory Committee

Abstract

Strategic Planning and Organizational Change:
Implications for Institutional Research

Strategic planning and institutional research activities can be orchestrated to nurture a global perspective in institutional culture and decision making. Leadership at a medium-sized public institution used strategic planning to change a culture that was insular, reactive, complacent, inward-looking, and dependent on state resources to one that is more outward-looking, interactive, entrepreneurial, and globally aware. Institutional research played a critical role in facilitating the transformation. Focusing on the planning process, Institutional Research analysis identified strengths and weaknesses which were subsequently maximized and rectified in a second cycle of strategic planning.

Strategic Planning and Organizational Change: Implications for Institutional Researchers

Introduction

"All great changes are irksome to the human mind, especially those which are attended with great dangers and uncertain effects."

--John Adams

"Yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself."

-- King Lear *I,i,296-97*

The difficulty we humans have in accommodating change was well-stated in John Adams letter to James Warren little more than two months before Adams helped draft the Declaration of Independence and usher in the momentous changes of the American Revolution. Though events in universities are seldom as profound or as dramatic as those of 1776, the tenacity with which institutional "loyalists" cling to their current organizational culture is at least as great as that of the Tories of yesteryear.

At the same time, the experience of Shakespeare's *King Lear* -- an apt symbol of aging institutional cultures if there every was one -- reminds us of the paucity of insight or self-knowledge in many organizations. It reminds us as well that, especially in periods of significant change, such understanding is sometimes dearly bought.

This paper illustrates how planning, with the aid (or complicity) of institutional research, can be a revolutionary activity that facilitates change within an organization and brings the organization to a more accurate understanding of itself.

Organizational Models

Organizations have been variously depicted as exhibiting distinct, characteristic behaviors. The first to do so formally was Max Weber (1947) who, in the 1920's, described features of the "Ideal Bureaucracy." Over time, the study of organizations has matured, and model building has become more extensive. A typology of models has been developed and refined and applied to a number of organizational settings.

The Academy as an Organization

One such setting is the academy. Its structure is unique, however, and distinguishes it from other types of organizations. Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker and Riley have observed five dimensions of this distinctiveness in the higher education enterprise:

> [Colleges and Universities] have ambiguous goals that are often strongly contested. They serve clients who demand a voice in the decision-making process. They have a problematic technology, for in order to serve clients their technology must be holistic and adaptable to individual needs. They are professional organizations in which employees demand a large measure of control over institutional decision processes. Finally, they are becoming more and more vulnerable to their environments (1977, p. 14).

These peculiarities have inspired specific adaptations of models to better account for behavior in the higher education organization.

Today, models of the following general varieties may be reviewed in the literature: bureaucratic (Blau, 1973; Callahan, 1962;), rational choice (Allison, 1971; Simon, 1957), decision process (Cohen & March, 1974; Olsen, 1976; Weick, 1976), collegial (Corson, 1960; Henderson & Henderson, 1974; Millett, 1962) political (Baldridge, 1971; Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker & Riley, 1977; Pfeffer, 1981, 1982), and cultural (Birnbaum, 1988; Masland, 1985; Sergiovanni, 1984). Dessler (1980) draws useful distinctions between classical and contemporary organizational theories. The former reflect and were often inspired by the effects of industrialization and its concern for production and efficiency. Bureaucratic and rational models are of this type. More contemporary theories have reflected a growing interest in the human factor in organizations and in how human relations affect the work place. Following this interest, recent theories have personalized organizations, shifting the focus away from the institution as an entity and toward its membership as thinking, feeling participants. Process, collegial, political, and cultural models are of this sort. Excellent examples of model comparisons abound in the literature (Birnbaum, 1988; Chaffee, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981). These provide both theoretical analyses and field comparisons of organizational models in higher education settings.

The Academy as a Culture

The "organization as culture" perspective currently enjoys predominant attention from the scholarly community. Cultural models hold that the purpose of inquiry is to

understand and make sense of, rather than to explain or describe. In donning cultural model lenses, one's focus is upon the unique aspects of particular issues and situations.

In his discussion of three types of perspectives on action within organizations, Pfeffer (1982) differentiates between those in which action is purposive, intentional, goal-directed and rational and those in which action is externally constrained and controlled. Both types, however, are causal models that connect external stimuli with internal response. A third perspective, different from these two, focuses more on process and on the construction of meaning around events that unfolds over time. This third perspective does not seek out cause-and-effect relationships, but rather studies the interaction between causation and outcomes. Further, it relies more on qualitative methodologies for its investigations. Cultural models of organization fit into this third perspective on action, where such action is seen as emergent, almost random, and dependent on process and social construction.

Cultural models have also been characterized as the symbolic approach to the study of organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1984). Inherent to these models are a series of basic assumptions about the nature of organizations and human behavior. First, it is not the event but the meaning attached to the event that is considered important. Second, this "meaning" is determined by the ways that humans have interpreted what happened. Third, many of the most significant events and processes are substantially ambiguous or uncertain, and these very features undermine the use of rational approaches to analysis, problem solving, and decision making. Fourth, when faced with uncertainty and ambiguity, humans create symbols that will reduce those conditions by making sense out of events. Such symbols include myths, stories and fairy tales, rituals and ceremonies, metaphors, humor, and play.

It may be said that every academic organization has its own "culture"-- those beliefs, guiding premises and assumptions, rituals, norms, customs and practices that influence individuals and groups and ascribe meaning to events. Because they are embedded in tradition, campus cultures tend to maintain a steady state -- even when faced with external threats to the status quo. Unfortunately for higher education, static cultures are poorly equipped to address the rapidly changing environment in which colleges and universities must operate. However, cultures can be transfigured to keep pace with environmental shifts. In a 1983 study of campus cultures, Chaffee and Tierney (1988) visited "Rural State," an institution that, in their analysis, exemplified a stable culture. But even so, the researchers recognized harbingers of organizational change in the wind. They sensed that the stable culture could evolve. And it did. The key to such an evolution is transformational leadership, an effective combination of visionary, collegial and decisive

characteristics brought to bear on an organization. A principal tool employed by leadership in these scenarios is institutional research.

The Case Study

An Academic Culture in Transition

One example of such a cultural transformation has been documented at Minot State University, a medium-sized public institution in North Dakota known to the Chaffee and Tierney audience as Rural State. Founded as a normal school in 1913, Minot State subsequently passed through a rather typical evolution: state teachers' college, state college, state university. However, its incarnation as state university did little to differentiate it from its insular and introverted teachers' college culture. While it functioned as a normal school and teachers' college, Minot State's culture reflected a congruence between its own clarity of purpose and the positive reinforcement it received from its external environment. In this environment, Minot State's relationship to the state of North Dakota and its citizens was all important. North Dakota's immigrant heritage (principally German and Scandinavian) placed great value on education as a primary means of social and economic mobility. Graduates of the institution were clearly seen -- and saw themselves -- as important contributors to the state and its development. The institution perceived that it was valued by the state for this work. The institution's subsequent ambitions for an expanded mission were driven largely by internal, ad hoc decisions that were also congruent with North Dakota's culture wherein growth is perceived as good. New degree programs and institutional name changes reflected that cultural assumption, but Minot State did little to increase the quality of its faculty and staff or to enlarge their roles, nor did it improve its financial situation, neglecting fund raising and development, and continuing to rely entirely on state funding and tuition. As a result, the institution's growth strained resources without providing strategic advantage.

By 1980 it had little to distinguish it: few Ph.D.s on a faculty which taught many hours and performed almost no public service or research; an administration drawn largely from local public schools; funding that came almost entirely from the state; a nonexistent development program; little interest in regional or national let alone global affairs; and an institutional culture characterized by a lack of concern for the strategic environment, a satisfaction with the status quo, and resistance to change. Clearly, Minot State's actions were largely externally controlled and constrained, and it showed little evidence of action that was purposive, intentional, or rational. Its culture -- the organizational interpretation of events -- was itself an obstacle to change.

In the 1980's control and constraint grew very tight indeed as Minot State confronted a series of threatening external events and forces beyond its control: a deteriorating state economy with resultant declines in state revenues and in public support for the institution (including a tax

revolt by the state's voters), a rapidly changing student body (fewer 18-21 year olds, more older-than-average students), serious underfunding by the higher education system and a disadvantaged competitive situation within the system, and strained resources overall, both human and financial.

During these years, Minot State attempted to grow its way out of its problems, a response much congruent with institutional culture and the boom-or-bust economic traditions of North Dakota. A populist, "across the board" mentality -- with respect to such things as salary, program support, and even program cuts -- was pervasive. Minot State's enrollment grew in this period, but its funding-per-student did not keep pace nor was it permitted any significant tuition increases. In desperation, the University embarked on long-range planning. However, true to its institutional culture, Minot State's plan became all things to all people and its planning outcomes a wish-list for new programs, increased numbers of faculty, more buildings, and better state funding. Predictably, few of these things came to pass, and little changed. Politically dominant (and, in some cases, dormant) departments and programs on campus retained their position, new initiatives went unfunded, and frustration grew. In a 1984 state-wide election, North Dakota voters rejected Minot State's initial bid for university status.

Noting both the underfunding and the frustration, the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges weighed in with a 1987 accreditation report which called the state legislature's attention to the underfunding while simultaneously criticizing Minot State's planning efforts, characterizing them as "irregular, projective, additive, and facilities-centered." The report insisted on a planning process that was "ongoing, strategic, prioritizing, and program-centered," and required the University to file a progress report within a year.

At about this time, newly hired leaders at Minot State brought enlightened perspectives to planning objectives and procedures. A new vice president for academic affairs and a new director of development took the lead, finding in their respective roles a mutual need to improve planning at the University. The VPAA had been assigned the task of responding to North Central's demand for improved planning. The director of development was frustrated in his fund raising efforts by the lack of clear strategic goals to communicate to prospective donors. The two quickly saw that Minot State's two previous planning efforts -- a 1980 ten-year, long-range plan and a 1985 update -- would not do. While both of these plans did set an institutional agenda, establish goals, produce some new programs and services, and expand the curricula, it was apparent that the "wish-list" quality of planning criticized by NCA would neither solve Minot State's problems nor focus its efforts. Both leaders also were painfully aware of the lack of institutional research on campus to support planning activities.

As they searched for alternative planning models which would provide for the ongoing, strategic, prioritizing, and program-centered approach called for by NCA, the two were influenced profoundly by George Keller's *Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American*

Higher Education (1983). As a result of this reading, a four-tiered planning process was designed that sought to adapt the campus to its external environment, determine priorities and strengths, match resources to initiatives, and institutionalize planning at the University.

The Planning Model

The new planning model at Minot State was constructed to complement the basic organizational structure of the institution and still allow for a two-way flow of information, counsel, and influence on University decision-making. The process called for analysis and synthesis progressing through four levels: departments, colleges, vice presidential areas, and cabinet. It was top-down in that the controlling assumptions, parameters, and guidance phase were initiated by the cabinet; it was bottom-up in that planning and strategic recommendations commenced at the departments.

Some of the key elements of the process were as follows:

(1) A five-year planning cycle with a major effort in year one and annual review and adjustments in years two through five;

(2) A four-tiered planning structure, guided by a University steering committee and involving all campus constituencies, including representation from the local advisory board;

(3) A three-phased time frame: guidance phase (guidance and parameters set by the steering committee); planning and decision phase (involving all levels of the University, beginning with department faculty); and implementation phase (action prescribed and accountability assigned for the goals established in the plan);

(4) Yearly evaluation of all University programs and activities with regard to key quality and performance indicators, and required recommendations for resource allocations for each program at each tier of the process;

(5) The first year of the process began in January 1990 and concluded with a published report in December 1990.

Methodology

The newly created Office of Institutional Research was charged with the evaluation of the first round of strategic planning. The objective was to determine the extent of campus commitment to the new vision of Minot State as an "Interactive University." A goal of strategic planning had been to forge an organizational mind set that encouraged academic and support units to recast the way they did business such that strategic linkages to external opportunities could be created. Would an analysis of the planning process produce evidence of commitment to this vision? The study design included the

development of an interview protocol and an in-depth analysis of memos, minutes, guidelines, and reports generated in the first round of planning. Additionally, a series of documents produced from earlier planning efforts was examined and used in judging how the campus has changed it organizational perspective over time (Higher Education Study Commission, 1983; Kegel, 1980, 1981; State Board of Higher Education, 1968).

Post-process interviews were conducted in the summer of 1991. Thirty individuals involved at one or more levels of the four-tiered process were given the opportunity to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of those planning activities. In addition to some demographic information, those interviewed were asked to comment on their perceptions of reasons for engaging in planning, the charge to units at each Tier level, concerns that drove decision making within units, and the relative impact of unit decisions on institutional planning.

Findings

Planning Strong Points

There were, in fact, several recognized strengths of the process:

1. This was acknowledged to be the first time that top-level administration sat down to discuss resource allocation in less-than-closed-door sessions.

2. For the first time in institutional history "mission" became explicit -- it was disseminated, valued, understood, communicated, believed.

3. This was also the first time academic units were invited into the planning arena so formally.

4. It was believed to be far better organized an effort to plan than had been previously experienced on the campus.

5. It was clearly a valuable process as it was viewed as a sign of shared governance. Even though some chose not to, it was recognized as an opportunity to participate in institutional decision making. Those who took it seriously, took it very seriously.

6. Some identifiable organizational changes resulted from (or are reflected by) the Five-Year Plan. Whether the plan actually inspired or merely reported those changes was not clear to many. But several "Plan" features were cited as having been implemented, e.g. the M.A.T. program in mathematics, the B.S. degree in business, the additional audiology faculty line, sabbaticals for faculty who wish to earn doctoral degrees, to name a few.

7. The process of planning also helped to strengthen ties with the community of Minot. Many reported that they thought it was good to include area people in discussions of institutional planning.

Planning Weak Spots

Additionally, some specific weaknesses were identified as a result of the post-process interviews. These shortcomings were of both a procedural and a structural nature.

Procedural weaknesses. Five deficient areas were identified. These were related to:

1. Timing. The timetable was too short to enable adequate articulation and discussion of important issues. Deadlines seemed imminent at Tier 4 and Tier 3 levels; then the ball appeared to have been dropped by subsequent levels -- Tier 2 and Tier 1 did not meet their deadlines. This led to a feeling of disenchantment in the process for many. Major, concurrent commitments competed for the campus' attention. For example, Minot State was simultaneously engaged in reaccreditation concerns. Also, the entire curriculum -- including general education -- was under revision in preparation for conversion from a quarter to a semester calendar.

There was considerable concern with the process because of these time constraints. Some believed the timing was more politically than bureaucratically driven. A conclusion of the study was that future cycles would build in a longer time line in order to reduce the anxiety which drove the process for many.

2. Preparation for Planning. Despite the widely available Planning Guidebook, there was not a uniform approach to planning activities. It varied from one Tier 4 unit to another. In some cases, unit faculty were either minimally or not at all involved in their unit's plan which was to be passed along to Tier 3. This appeared to have been a function of the Tier 3 leaders' assignment of work load to their units. Leaders' skills in organizing work load varied markedly among units. Also, no one recalled much "orientation" to planning other than some discussions of it in its early stages, for example at the Faculty Senate. Time that could have been productively spent engaging in the process was lost as units attempted to define the process for themselves. Further, there was confusion over: (1) terminology -- there was no commonly shared understanding of goals or of definitions; (2) mission -- there was uncertainty as to whether the intent was to define institutional mission or to select priority programs and then let those programs define the mission, (3) the role of institutional goals in discussions -- some were constantly aware of organizational goals as a "backdrop", but others did not concern themselves with overarching goals in unit discussions. Some Tier 4 units worked in isolation, not sharing

reports with other same-level units. Others, however, were reading all Tier 4 reports and benefited from making such comparisons.

It was determined that in subsequent cycles a top-down (Tier 1 to Tier 4) orientation to describe what was to happen at each Tier level would needed. Each Tier level leader would need to meet with his/her group and articulate expected outcomes of the group's work. Once the expectations were shared throughout the ranks, the Tier 4 units should then begin their work. In theory the assignments and end products would then be more comparable.

3. Communication Flow. Through the interviews it became evident that connections between Tier 4 discourse and the "Five-Year Plan" were not clear for many. Although some clearly saw Tier 4 issues reflected in the "Plan", many could not find evidence of that. The campus did not have time to review the plan between the time it was completed and the time it was to be forwarded to the State Board of Higher Education. Many believed a promise had been made to do so, and that they had been deprived of that opportunity to review their own work. There was, in the end, no sense of intimacy between constituents and the "Plan" for several reasons:

(1) Goals/objectives were no longer familiar or remembered.

(2) Few had a feel for how the campus was faring in regard to meeting those goals/ objectives.

(3) The dozens of goal statements in the final "Plan" had overwhelmed many of its readers.

It was clear that feedback loops needed to be built into subsequent cycles. Any Tier level reports that yielded different conclusions from preliminary Tier levels would perhaps need to be heavily annotated to explain differences. Good work accomplished by units at earlier Tier levels needed to be routinely acknowledged. Communication during the implementation phase is deemed as necessary as during the planning phase. It was concluded that an annual report summarizing progress made in goal attainment would help to convey the intended continuity of the planning process and offset the pervasive skepticism that seems to set in when no results are observed.

4. Information Use. The Planning Guidebook was implemented differently and inconsistently among units. The financial data that had been provided were difficult to use. It was unclear to participants what the numbers meant or how to best employ them. Indirect cost calculations presented a further problem to planning units. Overall, units were not making best use of information.

5. Planning/Budget Linkages. Although the Guidebook showed "how" to link plans to the budget, units were thought to not follow guidelines uniformly. Many had the

impression that they were "free to dream" -- the wish list approach -- at the Tier 4 level. These units made decisions that were unconstrained by budget considerations; they focused instead on issues of quality, canon, and ideal scenario.

It is crucial to the success of strategic planning to tie plans to budgets at each step of the process. Additional assistance with use of financial data needed to be offered to each Tier level. As one person observed, "At some [Tier level] the emphasis switched from tactics to strategy." Tier 4 units did not unilaterally view this as a strategic planning activity.

Structural Weaknesses. In addition to procedural weaknesses, two major structural weaknesses were identified.

1. The Tier 2 Level. Membership composition proved to be problematic for decision making. This was a condition of the personalities and roles of those included at this Tier. On the campus there was one program where the dean also performed the duties of department chair. These dual roles did not blend well at the Tier 2 level. Further, "power" was perceived to have been an issue at times. This triggered defensive behaviors among members. Organizational goals were not of paramount importance to Tier 2 discussions. Instead, turf issues took precedence and militated against open exchange. Expected outcomes of Tier 2 deliberations were unclear. It was not distinctly understood what was to result from their meetings and there was no sense of closure to their work. Some of the issues discussed at Tier 2 were reportedly unanticipated. It appeared to several of those interviewed that agenda items were introduced laterally at the Tier 2 and Tier 1 levels. However, it had been assumed that all agenda items would percolate up from the Tier 4 groundwork. Those issues that seemed to circumvent the process were immediately suspect and did not enjoy a dispassionate airing.

2. The Tier 1 Level. Problems of membership and representation were evident at the upper Tier also. There was much concern expressed in the interviews over the fact that the academic side of the house was underrepresented at Tier 1. The Tier structure had been particularly serviceable for the academic units (there was no Tier 4 unit work in student or financial affairs; in fact, the support areas did not appear to have been much organized to participate in planning). Several expressed the opinion that the top-level introduction of development and athletic concerns, for example, seemed to weight those interests more favorably and to the detriment of the academic side of the house.

Study findings suggested reconstituting both Tier 2 and Tier 1. Tier 2 might include hand-picked members of the faculty who would be certain to maintain a campus-wide perspective. Only those committed to wearing the "University hat" should be invited to participate. Tier 1 might include vice presidents and some significant others--deans, key

unit officers, faculty senate representation, senior faculty--who could be trusted to maintain an organizational perspective and to consider decision making in light of what was best for the entire institution. Personalities would need to be considered in this selection also. The Faculty Senate might provide a list of names; the president could then select from among them. The choice of players is key and should be a presidential prerogative. A better, more representative mix would likely yield better decision making results.

Another finding of the study pertained to the types of decisions to be considered by the Tiers. Seasoned planners generally agree that groups of this type should be asked to address strategic concerns only. Such groups ought not to be engaged in matters of retrenchment or cutbacks. Such decisions are politically untenable for them and should be reserved for the management team. Such decision dilemmas were evident at Minot State's Tier 3, Tier 2, and Tier 1 levels.

Discussion and Conclusions

Planning Lessons Learned

It was evident that strategic planning needed to become institutionalized at Minot State. At the time of the interviews, it was not viewed as an ongoing process. Many would like to have used planning cycles to build new elements into their programs; they wanted planning to be continual and were ready to begin again.

Many of the institution's goals were developed from the Tier 4 level discussions and influenced organizational planning directions. This important planning outcome needed to be reinforced: these goals need to be reaffirmed for the Tier 4 units and should become a backdrop against which subsequent cycles of planning take place. Units needed to be reminded that their unique "hand prints" had made an imprint on the grand design of the "Plan."

Shared governance is an honorable goal of institutional planning. It was concluded that it would well serve leadership objectives to deliberately acknowledge the contributions that faculty continue to make to improving their work environment. As we entered the next planning cycle, we reminded the faculty that these post-process interviews had brought to light many faculty-inspired changes to the process.

An individual needed to be assigned primary responsibility for working with either the President or the Chief Academic Affairs Officer to facilitate the planning process. This person would handle the logistics of meetings, materials preparation, and data synthesis, for example. During planning periods, this person would likely devote .5 FTE of the work week to planning concerns. Some departments, in fact, did not have any clerical

assistance to prepare the reports they needed to generate for the next Tier level. A "planning assistant" could trouble shoot such pitfalls.

Overall campus reaction to the planning endeavor and to academic affairs leadership was very favorable. There was a minority (albeit a vocal minority) opinion expressing dissatisfaction. However, the campus as a whole did not appear to be swayed by dissenting opinion.

It was concluded that in subsequent cycles not only would planning and budgeting need to be tied together, but also facilities planning and academic planning. Changes in academic programs often necessitate changes in facilities. Such causal connections would need to be spotted and monitored.

Historically, the presidents at Minot State had operated autocratically. There was this legacy to offset. The interviews affirmed the importance of participation to the faculty: "We always want input, though we don't always want to take time to do it...and we are miffed if our advice isn't taken." But it is the opportunity to contribute that is significant. Some will be incapable of setting aside turf issues -- a commonplace occurrence in times of uncertainty. This was a difficult process but an inherently good, valued process. Said one faculty member, "No one expects long range planning to be implemented as written. It serves as a skeleton and will change over time. Some don't understand that's how it operates. We're constantly moving. You can't tie yourself to a changing situation." Said another, "It takes time to change behavior, attitudes and culture. It's a cultural change. That's why communication is of the utmost importance."

The subsequent planning cycle capitalized upon these strengths and rectified the weaknesses. Included among these key revisions was a change of metaphors to convert the horizontal imagery of the process to a vertical, or sequential, one. This minimized the hierarchical connotation of the Tier structure, emphasizing instead a progressive, forward-moving activity.

Study findings indicate that the planning process has resulted in new initiatives such as the establishment of an Office of Institutional Research, development of a telecommunications facility and course delivery system, organization of an institute for writing and critical thinking, reorganization of advancement boards and investment strategies, development of department endowments, installation of a campus computer backbone system, and establishment of a campus-community planning committee charged with developing ways to expand Minot State as an economic alternative to nearby Minot Air Force Base.

Strategic planning has also fostered a new global awareness at Minot State which, although only in it infancy, has resulted in some tangible initiatives. Among these are the

development of an international business curriculum in the College of Business, internationalizing the faculty and workshops sponsored by the Writing and Thinking Institute, contacts with the U. S. State Department and the German Embassy exploring faculty exchanges and consulting opportunities with the former Democratic Peoples Republic of Germany, exploration with the Danish ambassador for similar initiatives in Denmark, and faculty research visits to Russia, Estonia, and Czechoslovakia.

Culture in Transition

How did Minot State's planning process change institutional culture? Post-procedure analysis revealed the organizational culture was in transition. With the key assistance of institutional research campus leadership had, in fact, crafted a planning process that involved the institution in reorienting its priorities in light of environmental constraints and opportunities. In the short run, the process forced the university, particularly the faculty, to accept responsibility for connecting with and attempting to influence the external environment instead of remaining passive in the face of changing circumstances and blaming the state for failing to recognize and support that which in the faculty perception was the self-evident good of the University. It also forced the faculty to choose whether to participate or not in a process that offered them the opportunity to make real decisions about institutional priorities. Some chose to sit on the sidelines and complain, but most did take the opportunity and participated seriously. Not all agreed with the priorities that were set, but the vast majority has become convinced that the process transformed their input into real outcomes. Thus, the most meaningful shift in institutional culture was from perceptions and behavior that accepted the University as externally constrained and controlled to one which, if not always rational, at least in the main was purposive, intentional, and goal-directed. The process mobilized the organization; the culture is evolving. Minot State changed from an institution passively accepting of its fate to one determined to participate in the shaping of its own destiny.

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